

## Palm Sunday: The Triumphal Entry

### Mark 11.1-11

Today is Palm Sunday, the Sunday prior to Easter Sunday.

How date of Easter is determined.

Palm Sunday commemorates the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem in the days before his crucifixion.

Two traditions that were common in ancient times:

- It was a common custom in many lands in the ancient world to cover, in some way, the path of someone thought worthy of the highest honor. The palm branch was a symbol of triumph and victory.
- Among the Jews, at the beginning of Passover, a lamb was chosen by the high priest outside of Jerusalem on the tenth of Nisan. Then the priest would lead this lamb into the city while crowds of worshippers lined the streets waving palm branches and singing Psalm 118, "Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord."

All of the Gospels report that the people gave Jesus this honor, probably because they, along with most of the disciples, expected a military victor instead of a Lamb that was to be slain.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke reported that the people lay their garments and cut branches in the way before Jesus. John is the only Gospel to specifically mention palm branches – and thus the name Palm Sunday.

As we look at the Scripture this morning, I want you to see that the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem by Jesus that morning was no accident of history.

God is in charge of all that happens in the world. He did not just know when Jesus would enter Jerusalem – He had set everything in motion before the foundation of the world for just this moment in time.

The design of God is very evident in the Triumphal Entry.

### I. Date

Important dates in history (watersheds):

- Oct 12, 1492 Columbus discovered America
- Apr 12, 1861 Beginning of Civil War
- Dec 07, 1941 Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor
- Nov 22, 1963 President Kennedy assassinated
- Jul 20, 1969 Neil Armstrong walked on the moon
- Sep 11, 2001 Fall of the Twin Towers, NY
- Next week: Easter, celebration of resurrection

But today is one of the most significant days in the history of the universe.

Time will not permit an in-depth study of this subject, but it relates to our purpose here this morning. So look with me just a moment at the **Book of Daniel, Chapter 9**.

At or near the age of 15, Daniel along with many Jews had been carried away into captivity by the Babylonians. In chapter 9 of Daniel, he is between 80 and 90 years old.

One day while Daniel was praying, the angel Gabriel came to him and made this proclamation.

**(Read Dan. 9:24-25)**

At the time of the prophecy, a year was figured as being 360 days in length.

IN addition, the word translated “weeks” is, in Hebrew, the word “sevens,” so that 69 weeks is actually 69 sets of seven – believed by almost all biblical scholars to mean 69 sets of seven years.

When you do the math, (69 x 7) the prophecy said that there would be 483 years between the time of the decree to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem following the Babylonian exile until the coming of the Messiah.

The decree to rebuild the walls was made by King Artaxerxes about March 14, 445 BC. (Neh. 2)

If you go forward 483 years in time, you come to the events of our text in Mark 11. In fact, one authority on the subject, Sir Robert Anderson, identified the very date of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem as April 9.

Through the OT prophets, God revealed exactly when the Messiah would come. But He also revealed how the Messiah would enter the city.

## II. Donkey

***Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.***

Jewish leadership, in spite of their claims to knowing and keeping all of the Law, had apparently not taken all of the prophets literally.

They had drifted away from a true devotional faith in Jehovah, the God who was, is, and evermore shall be and had taken a downward spiral into religious legalism.

And they had dragged the people of Israel along with them.

Faith in God has always been a matter of the heart. The Jewish leaders had turned it into a matter of the mind and merely an exercise in legalism.

So, either they did not recognize the Messiah when he came amongst them, or their hearts were so hardened that they could not recognize Him.

Yet, there He was – teaching, healing the sick, casting out evil spirits, and preaching that the kingdom of God – the glory of God – was ***“at hand.”***

But they did not recognize Him, even though He came on the date Daniel prophesied, riding on a donkey as prophesied by Zechariah, and from the very direction prophesied by Ezekiel.

## III. Direction

### A. The glory of God departed from Jerusalem

***Ezekiel 43:4 As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, 5 the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.***

Throughout the life of the nation of Israel, the people had the unique privilege of being able to actually **see the glory of God**.

When Moses led the people of Israel out of Egyptian captivity, the glory of God preceded them in their journey – first as a pillar of

smoke by day and of fire by night “to show them light, and the way wherein they should go...” (Neh. 9:19)

**Ex. 13:21** *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. 22 The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.*

**Ex. 33:7** *Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. 8 Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. 9 When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses. 10 And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door.*

**Ex. 40:34** *Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36 Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. 37 But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up.*

When you study the presence of the glory of God, you will notice that one of the most significant features of the glory of God is that it was always accompanied by the voice of God.

• Exodus 16.10	The glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud	Ex. 16.11	And the Lord spoke...
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• Exodus 24.16	The glory of the Lord abode upon Mt. Sinai	Ex. 24.16	And he called unto Moses...
• Exodus 40:34	The glory of the Lord fills the Tabernacle	Ex. 41.1	And the Lord spoke...

**When the glory of God is present, the voice of God is heard.**

Ezekiel, one of the OT prophets, had the unique experience of being able to actually see the glory of God in more detail than possibly any other man other than the Apostle John.

**Ezekiel 1:28** *As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spoke.*

**When the glory of God is present, the voice of God is heard.**

But the opposite is also true: **When the glory of God is absent, the voice of God is silent.**

Ezekiel warned the people of Israel that, because of their disobedience to God and their blatant disregard for His Law, the glory of God would one day depart from among the people.

In fact, Ezekiel was allowed to see this very thing happen.

- In **Ezekiel 8**, he sees the glory of God in the midst of the Temple.
- In **Ezekiel 9**, the glory of God departed from the Holy of Holies and moved to the threshold of the Temple (over the entrance).
- In **Ezekiel 10**, the glory of God moves farther away by abandoning the threshold.

- Finally, in **Ezekiel 11.23**, “...*the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.*”

God’s glory left the Temple, then it left the city of Jerusalem – And the voice of God went silent.

For four hundred years between the last prophet of the OT until the birth of Jesus, there was no word from God. Think of it – no word from God for 400 years! How dreadful and depressing.

But God does not leave His people without hope.

The prophecy of Ezekiel may have been one of gloom and doom in its early parts. But it ended on a note of hope and glory.

### Ezekiel 43

*1 Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate that faces toward the east. 2 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. 3 It was like the appearance of the vision which I saw – like the vision which I saw when I came to destroy the city. The visions were like the vision which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. 4 And the glory of the LORD came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east. 5 The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple. 6 Then I heard Him speaking to me from the temple, while a man stood beside me.*

Notice...

- Verse 4: The glory of the God** of Israel came from the way of the east – from the Mount of Olives – and *his voice* was like a noise of many waters

- Verses 5-6:** The **glory of the LORD** filled the house and I *heard him speaking* unto me

When the glory of God is present, the voice of God is heard.

B. Jesus is the glory of God.

### Rev. 21

*10 (An angel) carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God...23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

C. Jesus is the voice of God.

### John 1

*1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

When the glory of God is present, the voice of God is heard.

When the glory of God is absent, the voice of God is silent.

### ➤ **Application:**

How about you?

Have you heard a word from God lately? Could it be that today even – on this Palm Sunday – this anniversary of the “Triumphal Entry” – God is speaking to your heart?

If the word of God is speaking to you, then God's glory is with you.

If the word of God does not speak to you, then there is reason for you to question the presence of God in your life.

Remember this –

**When the glory of God is present, the voice of God is heard.**

In Matthew, the Triumphal Entry is recorded in chapter 21.

After several confrontations with them, Jesus just unloads the wagon in condemnation on the Pharisees and religious leaders of the day in Chapter 23.

Then, at the end of the chapter, He says this:

***Matt. 23.38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.***

***39 For I say unto you, you shall not see me henceforth, till you shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.***

Because the religious leaders and the people failed to see Jesus for who he was, they could never understand the significance of his power nor the purpose in God's plan.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday He wept for Jerusalem and for the people of Israel. In Luke's version of this story we read in chapter 19, verse 42...

***Luke 19.42 "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. 44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not***

***leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."***

As long as God's glory was recognized and worshiped, then the word of God remained with the people of Israel, blessing them and giving them peace.

If our nation is to be blessed, then God must be glorified here as well. And that can only happen when we recognize Jesus for who He truly is – the Christ, the Son of the Living God.